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Following is a speech by Walter J. Stoessel, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, before the Atlantic Institute, Brussels, October 24, 1981.

I am pleased and honored to have been asked to speak today in observance of the Atlantic Institute's 20th anniversary. The Institute has long and ably strengthened the transatlantic ties that unite us, by providing a meeting place and platform where we could exchange ideas and deepen our understanding of the challenges which confront us. And it is thanks in good measure to leaders such as my old and dear friend Marty Hillenbrand [Ambassador Martin J. Hillenbrand], who has dedicated himself for so long to the strengthening of Atlantic relations, that the Institute has played so important and constructive a role.

It also is indicative of the relevance of the Institute's deliberations that the theme of this conference be "Conflict or Cooperation in the 1980s." The question could not be more timely, or the answers more vital. We have had both in the past and we will inevitably have both in the future. The mix—of how much conflict and how much cooperation—will be determined by the health and vitality of the Atlantic alliance itself and by how we adapt to new challenges. What do we see as we look at the alliance today, and how can we judge the prospects for future years?

First of all, we note the durability and continuity of the alliance. How many Americans and West Europeans would have believed, when the North Atlantic Treaty was signed on April 4, 1949, that in 1981 the Atlantic alliance would still be the centerpiece of our respective foreign policies. After 32 years there remain:

- A formal American guarantee coupling the security of the United States to that of Western Europe;
- An integrated military force including an American military presence here of some 300,000 men; and
- An elaborate structure of planning and consultation through which we devise and implement together a wide range of policies—in short, the Atlantic system with which we are now so familiar.

Just as the Soviet threat has endured, so too has the alliance formed to cope with it. The challenges remain, although they have changed in form and dimension. The prospects are that the threat will continue for the foreseeable future, and that American involvement will also continue as an essential requirement to balance that threat.

The durability of the alliance is remarkable in view of the almost annual "crises" it has lived through, and which I and so many of you have personally experienced. Repeated commentaries, at least since the mid-1960s, have found the alliance troubled, irrelevant,

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anachronistic—and its prompt demise has been regularly predicted. Certainly the doubters of all kinds have had the "lessons of history" on their side. After all, what other alliance of this diversity has endured for decades as a successful deterrent to war? The answer: none! The alliance's survival is all the more remarkable given the turbulence of the world surrounding it. At the same time, we cannot and do not ignore trends within the alliance which, if left unaddressed, would detract from our cohesion and effectiveness. We have dealt effectively with similar "crises" in past periods of the alliance, and we, therefore, should also face the present period with confidence. The consequences of ignoring our problems are as undesirable as they are avoidable.

Quite simply, the effectiveness of the alliance results from the fact that the fundamentals have not changed.

- First, we in the Atlantic democracies are united by shared history, culture, values, and interests;
- Second, the Soviet threat to Western European security and political independence persists;
- Third, Western European and American security is indivisible;
- Fourth, the health and vitality of our alliance is such that our arguments concern how best to shape the alliance, not whether there should be an alliance.

If these fundamentals represent our shared past, what do we see as we look toward our common future?

- We believe that our shared heritage and values will continue to unite us.
- We believe that the original raison d'etre of the alliance—the Soviet challenge—will not diminish and will continue to be the central foreign policy problem facing the Atlantic democracies;
- We believe that the alliance will remain the most effective, the least dangerous and the least costly way to meet the challenge; and
- We believe that the issues on which we may differ will continue to be significantly less important to us than our continued mutual commitment to Atlantic security.

Of course, this does not mean that we can simply take the alliance's vitality for granted. The Reagan Administration fully appreciates that the alliance requires concerted effort. Our frequent, high-level consultations with NATO partners since Inauguration Day—here in Brussels, in other capitals and in Washington—testify to the renewed importance we attach to this process.

Defining the Soviet Threat

At this juncture in history it is useful to look back to the situation 10 or 12 years ago. East-West relations were then entering the most active phase of what an earlier American administration called a "search for areas of agreement." The Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin, the West German *ostpolitik* treaties, and the Helsinki Final Act are legacies of the period.

At that time many hoped that these agreements might lead to a web of East-West accords, to the further integration of the Soviet Union into the world order. Others feared that these agreements, whatever their individual merits, would create moral and physical disarmament, outpacing the real increase in security.

We can now see to what an extent the hopes placed in detente have failed to be realized. The Soviet Union has in recent years carried out an unprecedented conventional and strategic military buildup far in excess of its legitimate defense needs. This buildup has continued through a period when the West pursued policies of detente, when the U.S. defense budget did not grow in real terms, and when NATO undertook virtually no nuclear force modernization. Nowhere is this more dramatic than in Moscow's deployment of SS–20 missiles, targeted against Western Europe, which has destabilized the military balance on the continent and threatens the alliance's ability to deter the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union has increasingly intervened in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, and supported intervention by its allies and proxies. Whether seen as the pursuit of targets of opportunity or as part of a grand strategic design, whether carried out directly or through proxies, Moscow's occupation of Afghanistan and Soviet-backed interventions in Southeast Asia, the Horn of Africa, Southern Africa, and Central America are realities. As a result, Atlantic security is challenged not only frontally in Europe, but also through the projection of Soviet force into other regions of vital interest to us.

Additionally, the Soviets have demonstrated a cavalier attitude toward international undertakings to which they are a party. The Soviet record on compliance with the Helsinki Final Act reinforces doubts about the seriousness with which Moscow takes its international obligations. The Soviets continue to violate the spirit and letter of the Final Act's human rights provisions.

When we contemplate the record I have outlined, it is evident that even as the Soviet Union professes benign intent, its actions undermine its credibility. Soviet behavior is a serious and growing threat to our own security and to the basic principles on which a humane and rational international system must be based.

We hear voices today asserting that this record is irrelevant, that peace can be advanced through unilateral acts of good will and that a balance of strength is no longer essential. To believe this is profoundly dangerous, for it misreads the motives for and implications of Soviet actions. We ignore at our peril the need to strengthen our defenses and the requirement that we counter public pressures which threaten our ability to do what is necessary.

Meeting the Continuing Challenge of Deterrence

Since its creation, the Atlantic alliance has constantly had to address the question of how to deter Soviet attack. It is hardly surprising that it has not always been easy to agree on such an important issue. Neither should we be surprised when we encounter disagreement in the 1980s about doctrine, defense spending, and the nature of the threat. But this is hardly a prescription for complacency. Today's international situation dictates that we reaffirm our commitment to effective security. Only then can we take those diplomatic initiatives which can bring about the moderation of Soviet behavior we seek.

The United States is undertaking sacrifices unprecedented in peacetime to improve America's overall capabilities, including our strategic deterrent. At the same time, alliance unity and resolve on

many fronts are demonstrating how effectively we can work together, through strengthening our defenses and pressing for serious negotiations on the issues which divide East and West, to strengthen the peace. It is clear that NATO's December 1979 dual decision on theater nuclear forces (TNF), by enhancing deterrence, has brought the Soviet Union to the negotiating table. Serious and effective talks will be possible so long as we continue to carry through on both tracks of the 1979 decision. In the Madrid CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe] review meeting, which will reconvene in 3 days, Western firmness has brought progress on both human rights and security issues. Our approach is designed to lay the groundwork for agreement by Christmas on a balanced and substantive concluding document which would provide a mandate for the first stage of a European disarmament conference and for progress in the field of human rights.

We seek, and are committed to attain, a redefined East-West relationship under which each side recognizes the legitimate interests of the other. We want greater Soviet respect for the independence of others. And we want the Soviets to abide by their reciprocal obligations. If we are to accomplish these aims we must combine perseverance, firmness, and strength. As part of this effort, we need to reverse years of neglect and respond to the Soviet military buildup by strengthening our own conventional and strategic posture. We must also leave no doubt, through word or deed, of our commitment to the indivisibility of our security. As the dual decision on theater nuclear forces and our continuing stationing of large numbers of American troops in Europe clearly demonstrate, any attempt to "decouple" Western Europe from the United States is doomed to failure.

Ours is a policy of reasonable strength; it is not a policy of confrontation. Through it we seek a stable peace, not the "naked, poor and mangled peace" of which Shakespeare wrote. Secretary Haig has made it abundantly clear that we offer the Soviet Union a broad relationship of mutual benefit.

- We see the extensive talks in New York last month between Secretary Haig and Foreign Minister Gromyko as the beginning of a process which could lead to this new relationship.
- We seek to resolve outstanding regional conflicts and reduce tensions which are costly to all of us.
- We seek balanced and verifiable arms control agreements, which we hope the TNF talks, set to start November 30, and the strategic arms talks, which should begin during the first half of 1982, will produce.
- We offer the benefits of greater East-West trade in nonstrategic goods.

We are committed to making this more stable relationship a reality. But to realize these goals, the Soviet Union must play its part. We no longer wish to live with a kind of double standard in which Soviet pronouncements of peaceful intent are contradicted by its actions in the real world.

To sum up this portion of my remarks, I wish to emphasize two things:

First, our commitment to the defense of Europe is firm and unshakable. Those tempted to doubt this should reflect on the significance of the presence of our troops in Europe. It is an earnest of our commitment which has endured over a quarter of a century. They should also reflect on the significance of the indivisibility of alliance security. U.S. strategic forces are the ultimate guarantor of European security, and our nuclear strategy—a key component of our overall deterrent strategy of flexible response—is to convince any aggressor that the use of nuclear weapons in Europe could not reasonably be limited to Europe. Indeed, we and our allies adopted the December 12, 1979 TNF modernization decision in order to strengthen the link between U.S. strategic forces and NATO's conventional forces and in order to disabuse the Soviet Union of any hopes that it might regionalize a nuclear conflict in Europe. To claim that the United States would seek to limit a nuclear war to Europe is outright deception. Thus, there are a continuity and solidity to our commitment which provide a firm basis for trust and confidence in us as partners and reliable allies in any circumstances.

Second, we are not rigid and confrontational towards the Soviet Union. We follow a policy of realism, determined to be strong enough, together with our allies, to protect our common interests, but determined also to spare no effort to carry on a dialogue with the Soviet Union and to seek a reduction in arms to the lowest level compatible with the principles of stability and balance.

Dealing with the World Beyond

The treaty establishing the Atlantic alliance defines the geographical area in which its security guarantees are effective. But we as allies have recognized from the start—and recent tragic events in Egypt have demonstrated once again—that developments beyond the treaty area are relevant to our well-being. In fact, it has been a cliche that the Western countries have shifted their concentration from Europe and toward Third World and global issues. This was always only a partial truth. But to the extent that it was true in part it was not because Europe and its problems had become less important. It was because Europe, for most of the past three decades, was reasonably well stabilized by the deterrence provided by the Atlantic alliance.

Moreover, the focus on the world beyond does not represent a total change in perceptions. We tend to forget the attention we have given over the years to regions such as East Asia and the Middle East, and to the range of issues created by the process of decolonization. The last Arab-Israeli war and the ensuing petroleum embargo, the economic distress suffered by most Western countries in the 1970s, the Iranian revolution, the Iran-Iraq war and attendant threat to the Persian Gulf, and the escalation of Soviet interventionism in the developing world—all of these underscore the relevance to our security of events far from the treaty area. These facts are well understood in the alliance. But some of the policy issues they pose have strained the framework of alliance cooperation.

In order for us to deal more effectively with such cases, we must develop a common interpretation of the nature of events in the developing world and their implications, as we must also devise appropriate ways in which we can act to protect our interests and our values.

It is precisely at the level of perception that we should broaden the alliance consensus on problems beyond the treaty area. We must, without exaggerating the extent and success of Soviet efforts to penetrate the Third World, seek common understandings of the implications for all of us of North-South issues and events in the developing world. Certainly the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, aside from reinforcing doubts about Moscow's ultimate intentions generally, places the Soviet Union perilously close to the West's oil lifeline in the Persian Gulf. Soviet support for violent change in Africa is an intrinsically disturbing phenomenon. The threat against Poland has been of great concern and a subject of effective consultation among us. And Soviet activities, direct and proxy, in Latin America clearly are aimed at projecting Soviet influence into a region historically beyond Soviet interests.

Of course, more common perception of the nature and implications of such Soviet activity does not guarantee agreement on concerted action. It is all the more important, then, that the West insure that it can draw on a full range of responses, from individual national initiatives by several or more nations to coordinated actions. Such responses may or may not involve military aspects. The important thing is to recognize that Moscow can be deterred only if it is convinced of our resolve and ability to respond.

At the same time we should improve our capacity to concert our efforts in addressing the social, economic, and political conditions in the developing world which create the instability on which Soviet interventionism feeds. This does not mean expanding the treaty area. But it does mean articulating our concerns more effectively, taking the broader security situation into account as we develop our defense and foreign policies, and displaying a readiness to share the burden and risks involved in this effort.

In sum, there is no dearth of challenges facing the alliance: the interrelated challenges of an expansionist Soviet Union and a rapidly changing world. In a very real sense they embody the choice between cooperation and conflict which is the theme of this conference. Cooperation can only be understood in terms of responsibility and mutuality of obligation. The alliance is the sine qua non for assuring that others behave in a manner consistent with those principles. We must thus be prepared to oppose unacceptable international behavior, and provide incentives for moderation and responsibility.

We will always face conflict, but we will be able to manage and isolate conflict to the degree that the alliance is vigorous and creative in meeting, and anticipating, the challenges of the 1980s—whether they emanate directly from the Soviet Union or come in less clear-cut ways in a variety of far-off places.

Any human endeavor must, in the last analysis, be judged by the challenges it accepts—by those it overcomes or by those which prove too much for it. By this standard, the Atlantic alliance is not only historically unique, it is singularly successful, having afforded Europe its longest period of peace and prosperity in the 20th century. The challenges which confront us today are no less difficult than those which the alliance has met since its inception; in many respects they are even more sobering. But if we face them with the creativity, the determination, and, if necessary, the sacrifice we have demonstrated in the past, we are certain to prevail.

The Reagan Administration reflects the renewed self-confidence and clarity of purpose of the American people. We call on our friends in the Atlantic enterprise to join us in reaffirming these shared purposes. We call on you to join us in renewing our dedication to work through the alliance for that restraint and responsibility on which a new era of genuine international stability and progress depends. ■

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